

Identify and Reward Great Teachers and Principals: **Give School Leaders Flexibility to Promote Excellence.**

Strengthening and enforcing accountability without giving school leaders the flexibility and authority they need to drive results is akin to punishment and does not serve our children. School leaders should be held responsible for the performance of their school and must have the autonomy to make necessary improvements. We must empower school leaders to make staffing decisions that will ensure our students are receiving the highest quality education. Research shows teachers are the most important school-based factor impacting student success. Since we know teachers play such a pivotal role, school leaders must have the freedom and flexibility to recognize and reward great teachers, support their ongoing improvement, and, if necessary, remove those who chronically underperform.

Base evaluation systems on student learning.

We Must . . .

- Require rigorous and meaningful annual evaluations for all teachers and principals.
- Ensure evaluations are reliable, fair and accurate and are informed by student achievement or growth data.
- Use these evaluations to assess teachers and administrators, recognize our best educators and identify those who need support for improvement.
- Differentiate teachers fairly, accurately, and credibly along four discrete rating categories.
- Require evaluation results to be used to inform decisions about hiring, firing, professional development, compensation, placement, transfers and reductions in force.
- Hold principals accountable for driving student performance and teacher effectiveness.

Why?

- In too many schools, evaluations do not reflect real differences in teacher and principal effectiveness. They often fail to identify our best educators and neglect to highlight specific areas for improvement. In fact, many teachers might go years between receiving any meaningful feedback on their performance. As a result, the majority of teachers and principals do not get the support and development they need to improve as professionals.

Ensure collective bargaining laws support student learning.

We Must . . .

- Amend Public Law 217 so collective bargaining agreements between school corporations and teachers' unions can focus on salary and wage-related benefits and be innovative in recognizing performance through compensation.
- Allow for locally developed salary schedules that best serve student needs but also prohibit compensation policies that reward teachers based solely on seniority and degrees held.

- Provide teachers with the same due process rights that are afforded to school administrators.

Why?

- Collective bargaining agreements between school corporations and teachers' unions currently include many provisions that limit the optimum learning environment for kids. For example, many dictate that districts pay higher salaries to teachers with master's degrees – despite research stating master's degrees do not make teachers more effective (NCTQ 2004). Others mandate things like use of bulletin board space and teachers' lounge aesthetics – neither of which have any impact on student achievement. By simplifying one of the main sources of friction between labor and management, agreements can focus on salary and benefits so school leaders can focus on training, evaluating and rewarding teachers, and teachers can focus on delivering the highest quality classroom instruction possible.

Tie contract status to performance — not seniority.

We Must . . .

- Promote excellence by identifying and rewarding great teachers and school principals based on their performance rather than on seniority or degrees held—two things research shows have little influence on teacher effectiveness and student achievement.
- Require teacher effectiveness to be considered when making reductions in force decisions.
- Establish two-year teacher contracts, like those for administrators.
- Establish contract statuses that are earned based on teacher performance.

Why?

- Currently, teachers are given tenure-like status automatically after two years on the job. This practice both fails to recognize our best teachers and universally protects those who aren't effective. Moreover, it handcuffs schools by forcing them to make staffing decisions based on seniority as the overriding factor — without regard for a teacher's ability to promote student learning.